UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ General Assembly adopts Convention on safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel; decides to set up ad hoc committee to review issues arising from draft statute for international criminal court.

+ As General Assembly discusses United Nations financial situation, speakers stress need for full and timely payment of contributions.

+ Five Bangladeshi peace-keepers injured in deliberate attack in Bihac enclave; UNPROFOR continues to curtail activities in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina despite arrival of fuel convoy in Sarajevo.

+ Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee rejects draft resolution on capital punishment by 36 votes in favour to 44 against, with 74 abstentions.

+ Secretary-General appoints Dr. Peter Piot of Belgium as Director of joint United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS.

+ Lieutenant-General Rupert Smith of United Kingdom to replace Lieutenant-General Michael Rose as UNPROFOR Commander in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 24 January 1995.

+ Administrative and Budgetary Committee recommends General Assembly approve 4.1 per cent pay increase for Professional and higher category staff as of 1 March 1995.

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The General Assembly has adopted and opened for signature a Convention to ensure the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel. It took that action on Friday, in the course of adopting 18 texts recommended by its Sixth Committee (Legal) on a wide range of subjects.

Acting without a vote, the Assembly urged States to ensure the safety and security of United Nations and associated personnel, and to ensure that those responsible for attacks against them were brought to justice. The Convention will enter into force 30 days after the deposit of the twenty-second instrument of ratification or accession. It covers United Nations personnel

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engaged or deployed by the Secretary-General as members of a military, police or civilian component of an operation, as well as officials and experts on missions. Associated personnel are defined as those assigned by a government or an intergovernmental organization to carry out activities directly connected with a United Nations operation.

The Convention obliges States to establish jurisdiction over crimes against United Nations personnel including murder, kidnapping or threat of attack. It defines the duties of States to ensure the safety and security of personnel and to release or return personnel captured or detained. It calls on host States and the United Nations to quickly conclude agreements on the status of the United Nations operation and personnel.

In other actions, the Assembly decided to establish an ad hoc committee to review issues arising from the International Law Commission's draft statute for an international criminal court; decided to consider the deletion of the term "enemy State" from the United Nations Charter; and adopted a Declaration which condemned all acts of terrorism as criminal and unjustifiable, wherever and by whomever they were committed.

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The General Assembly met today to discuss the critical financial situation of the United Nations. The representative of Algeria, speaking on behalf of the "Group of 77" developing countries and China, said there were no objective indicators to suggest a link between the Organization's cash flow problems and the existing systems of assessment. He and several other speakers stressed that the situation could be substantially addressed only when all Member States paid their contributions in full and on time.

Speaking on behalf of the European Union and Austria, the representative of Germany asserted that the scale of assessments was closely linked to the issues of arrears and the improvement of the budgetary process. A scale of assessments that was simple, transparent and fair -- and was perceived to be so by Member States -- could contribute to an improvement of payment patterns.

The representative of the United Kingdom stated that a future binding commitment for Member States to be current with all payments was an essential part of any solution, but not sufficient by itself. In order to remove the inequities that had appeared in the scale of assessments for peace-keeping operations, it was necessary to review its methodology and to reapply it to all States on a basis that was demonstrably objective and fair.

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Five Bangladeshi peace-keepers were injured today when they came under attack in the town of Velika Kladusa, in the Bihac pocket, according to a United Nations spokesman. He said two wire-guided anti-tank missiles had been

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fired at their armoured personnel carrier. One of the missiles struck the vehicle, while the other exploded nearby. Meanwhile, Bihac town was shelled on Friday, Sunday and again today.

The spokesman went on to say that a United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) fuel convoy had reached Sarajevo today. However, the Force's activities continued to be curtailed because of serious fuel shortages. In a related development, Bosnian Serb forces permitted the rotation of Ukrainian, Russian and French peace-keepers monitoring heavy-weapons assembly points around Sarajevo, but continued to restrict their movement.

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The Third Committee (Social, Humanitarian and Cultural) has rejected a draft resolution that would invite restrictions on the use of capital punishment, by a vote of 36 in favour to 44 against, with 74 abstentions. It took that action on Friday, following recorded votes on an amendment and a procedural motion, and the withdrawal of all of the co-sponsors of the draft.

The amendment replaced the draft's preambular paragraph reaffirming the sovereign right of States to determine, in accordance with international law, including the Charter of the United Nations, the legal measures and penalties appropriate to deal with the most serious crimes, with the following: "Affirming the sovereign right of States to determine the legal measures and penalties which are appropriate in their societies to combat serious crimes effectively". After the adoption of the amendment, by a vote of 71 in favour to 65 against, with 21 abstentions, all 50 co-sponsors of the original draft resolution withdrew their co-sponsorship.

The representative of Egypt then proposed that no action be taken on the draft as a whole, which he said "had no parentage". The no-action motion was defeated by a vote of 60 in favour to 71 against, with 23 abstentions.

Those expressing support for the amendment, which was introduced by Singapore, stressed the importance of State sovereignty. Those opposing it, including the co-sponsors, said the original text's reference to international law and the United Nations Charter did not contradict the principle of State sovereignty. Citing the complexity of the issue, some representatives proposed that the matter be dealt with under the Committee's agenda item on crime prevention and criminal justice, or that it be dealt with by the Sixth Committee (Legal) of the General Assembly.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali today announced the appointment of Dr. Peter Piot, a Belgian national, as Director of the new joint United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS. Dr. Piot has served as Associate Director of the World Health Organization (WHO) Global Programme on AIDS, and as President of the International AIDS Society.

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"Faced with a truly global emergency and its multisectoral needs, it is imperative that the United Nations response is comprehensive and effective", said the Secretary-General. "HIV/AIDS will not be controlled unless all of us, acting as a global community, unite our efforts, coordinate our actions and reduce duplication."

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Lieutenant-General Rupert Smith of the United Kingdom is to replace Lieutenant-General Michael Rose as Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in Bosnia and Herzegovina on 24 January 1995, when General Rose's term of appointment expires. General Smith was Assistant Chief of the Defence Staff (Operations and Security) until November 1994, and helped formulate the United Kingdom's policy towards the former Yugoslavia.

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The Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) has approved two draft resolutions by which the General Assembly would approve a 4.1 per cent increase in the base salary scale for Professional and higher-category staff as of 1 March 1995. It also recommended a 10.26 per cent rise in allowances for children and secondary dependents from New Year's Day.

At its meeting on Friday, the Committee also considered the financing of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), administrative and budgetary coordination with specialized agencies and the review of United Nations efficiency.

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